New Professor Compares Education Systems in U.S. and Kenya

By Christy Currie

A new associate professor joined the Anthropology department this semester. St. Lawrence was able to offer Dr. Celia Nyamweru a staff position due to a grant the school received from The Ford Foundation in order to develop the African Studies program.

She arrived from Africa with one of her daughters, Wambui, who presently attends one of the Canton schools. Her other daughter, Wanjiru, will come to New York after swimming in the All-African Games in Cairo. At 13, she is the youngest member of the team.

Nyamweru attended Cambridge University and continued her education in Kenya doing work for her Ph.D. She specialized in the areas of physical geography and geology. Nyamweru has since spent much of her life in Kenya teaching at Kenyatta University. In the spring of 1985, she began to teach for the SLU Kenya Program.

Nyamweru said that SLU’s Kenya program is “very impressive.” After being involved with other college’s programs, she firmly believes that SLU’s is the best.

She commented on the fact that other schools have their own professors teach the students while in Kenya, possibly because they want to “filter out what the students hear.”

SLU students learn from Kenyans and Nyamweru found this important. The fact that students entered community villages within the first three days of their arrival impressed her as well.

The educational systems in Kenya and in the United States differ tremendously, according to Nyamweru. She said, “There is an incredible amount of pressure to succeed in Kenya.” Kenyan families have to struggle for education due to its expense and consequently, it is not taken for granted.

Serious competition arises at early levels of education and due to a mandatory exam, there is a big dropout rate after the eighth grade, according to Nyamweru.

In the U.S., Nyamweru spent fifteen minutes registering her daughter in school while in Africa, it took one year. She said that even kindergartners must go through tests before being accepted.

Professional Standards Committee Decides Fate of Six Professors

By Hilary Grunert

This year’s committee members are: Robert Schwartz, dean; Allen Rogers, chair; Tom Coburn, vice chair; Tom Greene, secretary; Peter Bailey, case minutes secretary; Dante Giarrusso; Sandy Hinchman; Mike Sheard.

Nyamweru feels that, “When it comes to looking at a nation-wide education system, the U.S. does quite well.”

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